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STATINTL

## *An El Greco for Greek Shipowner*

# Niarchos Buys a \$400,000 Painting

By John G. Rogers

CPYRGHT

Stavros S. Niarchos, Greek ship owner who operates the world's largest independent tanker fleet, has bought an El Greco painting from Wildenstein & Co., a New York gallery, for a price estimated as high as \$400,000.

Mr. Niarchos, now in Switzerland skiing, directed that the 365-year-old canvas be loaned indefinitely to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The transfer from the Wildenstein gallery at 19 E. 64th St. will probably be made today.

The canvas that changed hands is "Pieta," showing the Virgin and Mary Magdalene mourning over the dead Christ. It was executed about 1590 in Spain where the Greek-born El Greco executed his greatest work.

The painting is fifty-seven by forty-eight inches and has subtle

shades of gray, green and mauve picture is regarded by critics as one of the best examples of a great master.

The office of Mr. Niarchos and Wildenstein refused yesterday to discuss the price of "Pieta," which was last owned by French Comtesse de la Beraudiere, and came to New York in 1939 for exhibit at the World's Fair. It has not been exhibited here since. However, art experts said that such a canvas would bring a price between \$200,000 and \$400,000.

Mr. Niarchos has a home at 25 Sutton Place, and also in London, Monte Carlo and Athens, so if he chooses ultimately to hang it up in his living room, the painting might some day leave the country.

El Greco was born Domenico Theotocopoulos in Candia, Crete, about 1542. He studied in Rome and went on to Spain, where he died in 1614.

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